

## SIOUX VENGEANCE.

The True Story of the Custer Massacre.

## THE RECORD OF GREAT HEROISM.

The Savages Were Overwhelming in Numbers, and Mischap and Misunderstanding Did the Rest.



SITTING BULL'S tragic death closed another bloody act in the terrible drama of revenge that has had its scene in the Yellowstone region for a quarter of a century. The bloodiest period in that drama marked the slaughter of Custer and his devoted band, and in this Sitting Bull took part, either in person or through followers whom he inspired.

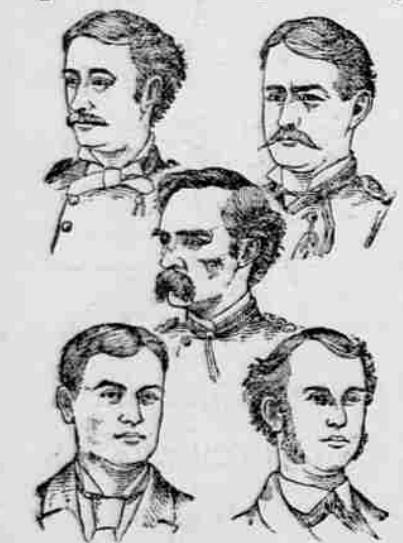
The most important leader of the hostile Sioux at the time was Crazy Horse, who, like Sitting Bull, was simply head man of a band and not a chief. The warriors led by these head men numbered about 250. In the early spring of 1876 repeated hostilities on the part of these roving bands toward white settlers and friendly Indians in Montana and Dakota stirred the government to some action to bring them under subjection. It was proposed to surround them and offer the usual terms.

The Indians were on the Yellowstone or its tributaries, and a column of troops under Gen. Terry and another under Gen. Crook started from opposite directions with the purpose of hemming them in.

Terry was on the north along the Yellowstone, and had with him two bodies of infantry and cavalry, one led by himself and the other by Col. John Gibbon. Custer was with Terry, and commanded the Seventh cavalry. While the columns were halted near the mouth of Rosebud river a scouting expedition struck a fresh lodge pole trail leading toward Big Horn river, a stream parallel with the Rosebud and thirty to fifty miles west of it. Terry divided his forces into two columns, one led by Gibbon, comprising all the infantry and four troops of cavalry, to move along the Yellowstone to the Big Horn and then southward along that stream, closing in on the redskins from the north, and the other, consisting of the Seventh cavalry, led by Custer, to move southward along the Rosebud until he struck the Indian trail.

Terry accompanied Gibbon's column, and gave Custer discretionary powers as to his action after striking the trail. He stated to Custer that he believed the trail would lead toward Little Big Horn, a tributary of Big Horn draining a hilly region between that river and the Rosebud, and expressed the opinion that Custer had best not follow it in that case, but continue southward a specified distance, and then swing in westward toward Little Big Horn, to prevent the escape of the Indians south or southeast should they flee before Gibbon's column. Custer started from the mouth of the Rosebud June 22, and on the morning of June 25 crossed the "divide" between Rosebud and Little Big Horn, following the trail into a little valley leading to the latter stream.

Custer left no explanation of his reason for following the trail instead of continuing on southward, as Terry suggested. He consulted with his officers and scouts about crossing the divide in the presence of Indians who had been seen, and after crossing it and reaching the sheltering valley separated his regiment into four bodies and gave orders to sweep down on a wide circuit to the river. Custer, with Companies C, E, F, I and L, kept straight ahead. Maj. Reno, with three companies, marched on the opposite side of the valley stream, and Capt. Benteen, with three companies, marched on the left of Custer. A company of Capt. McDougal was left with the pack train. Reno and Custer moved within sight of each other during the forenoon,



Col. Tom Custer. Gen. Custer. Capt. Calhoun. Antie Reed. BOSTON CUSTER. THE CUSTER FAMILY OF VICTIMS.

and about 11 o'clock Custer signaled Reno to rejoin him, and an hour later instructed him to move forward and charge. The recall of Reno from the center made a wide interval between the right and left wings under Custer and Benteen, and as Reno went ahead in direct advance of Custer the gap remained unclosed. Benteen went on, as ordered, an hour and a half, and not finding Indians closed in to the right, recrossed the little valley, and regained the main trail in rear of Custer.

The column was thus moving in four bodies on the same route in the following order: Reno, Custer, Benteen, McDougal. Reno dashed ahead, reached Little Big Horn and crossed, hearing nothing further from Custer. Benteen, after recrossing the little valley to the main route, met a man of Custer's column returning with an order to McDougal to hurry forward the pack train. Later a messenger from headquarters was met returning with an order to Benteen to come on quick; there was a big village ahead. These two communications were the last that passed between any soul of Custer's party and any known survivor, excepting one, from the time Reno parted company with them.

The exception was an Indian scout, who served Custer as a scout, and during the fight disguised himself as a Sioux and escaped. His story is corroborated in part by the testimony of Kill Eagle, who was one of the

hostiles, and by the position of the bodies of Custer and his followers, as found. It appears that Custer followed Reno to the point where the latter crossed Little Big Horn, and kept on down the east bank of the stream four miles, thinking that Reno's attack would fall upon one end of the village and that he would attack the other. The high bluff of the river prevented his attacking where he wished, and when finally he reached a ford the Indians met him and drove him back from the stream. Custer then dismounted his men and gradually retired in the face of superior numbers, seizing the most defensible positions he could find. For several hours these were defended, the officers and men falling in the order in which they stood in the ranks. The Indians charged again and again, and Custer went about among his men animating them until he fell very near the last.

The scout stated that when the fight seemed hopeless he went to Custer and offered to help him to escape; that the gallant soldier thought a moment, with a characteristic poise of the head, then, seeing the Indians pouring down for a fresh attack, waved the tempter away and joined a knot of men to fight his last. The story told by Kill Eagle is to the effect that an attack was made on the southern end of the Indian camp by troops from across the river (Reno), but was soon repulsed, the troops recrossing to a bluff, where they were joined by other troops (Benteen and McDougal). The hostiles returned to the village after repulsing this attack on the south, and were immediately summoned to meet troops coming across the river on the east (Custer). The warriors all deserted the village and crossed the stream to fight. After several hours they returned, stating that the soldiers had all been killed. Then they crossed the stream again to the hill and attacked the troops there (Reno, Benteen and McDougal).

The movements of Custer after he made an ineffectual attempt to cross Little Big Horn at the ford were indicated by the positions of the bodies found by Gen. Terry when he reached the mournful scene. Three-fourths of a mile from the stream lay Calhoun's company in an irregular line. They had fought facing the river. A mile distant lay Capt. Keogh's company, facing back toward Calhoun's position. A mile further lay Capt. Yates' company, with other officers, indicating that at this point a general stand had been made.

This position faced northeast, showing that the Indians had made a circuitous march and headed off the troops, causing them to fight with their backs to the river. Gen. Custer, Col. Cook, the adjutant, Capt. Yates and Capt. Tom Custer, Lieut. Hiley and thirty-two men fell here.

A mile from this point and near the river a last stand had been made, and here some of Yates' men and Capt. Smith's company lay in line, with their backs to the river. Between this point and the spot where Custer fell the route was marked with the bodies of twenty-six dead soldiers.

From statements made by hostiles engaged against Custer it is inferred that the Indians encountered him personally, hand to hand, that he fought desperately with his sword and was shot by one Rain-in-the-Face. Custer's body was not mutilated, and his was the only one in the group entirely spared. The number of warriors engaged was estimated by good judges at about 2,500. The bands of Crazy Horse and Sitting Bull were present, and Crazy Horse was the inspiring genius on the Indian side. The savages had large reinforcements from the neighboring reservations.

The number of troops with Custer was 277. A monument on the crest where Custer made his last stand records the names of all who fell. The battle ground is a national cemetery. Terry's column numbered 1,100 men in all, and all the tribes in the vicinity sent their warriors to the camp on Little Big Horn to overwhelm whatever troops had the temerity to attack. Gen. Crook's column, 1,000 strong, on its march north to co-operate with Terry had attacked these same Indians near the head waters of the Rosebud the week previous, and meeting with defeat had returned south without effecting a junction with Terry. Terry reached Custer's battlefield two days after the fight.

GEORGE L. KILMER.

**THE INDIAN'S CHALLENGE.**  
Blaze with your serried columns,  
I will not bend the knee;  
Your shakles ne'er again shall bind  
Them which now are free.

I've scaped ye in the city,  
I've scaped ye on the plain;  
Go, count your chosen warriors they fell  
Beneath my leader's rain!

I scorn your proffered treaty;  
The paleface I defy!  
Revenge is stamped upon my spear,  
And Blood I my battle cry!

Some strike for hope of booty,  
Some to defend their all,  
I battle for the joy I have  
To see the white man fall;

I love, among the wounded,  
To hear his dying moan,  
And catch, while chanting at his side,  
The music of his groan.

Ye've trailed me through the forest,  
Ye've tracked me o'er the stream,  
And struggling through the everglade,  
Your bristling bayonets gleam!

But I stand as should the warrior,  
With his rifle and his spear;  
The scalp of vengeance still is red,  
And warns ye—come not here!

I loathe ye in my bosom,  
I scorn ye with mine eye,  
And I'll laugh ye with my latest breath,  
And fight ye till I die!

I ne'er will ask ye quarter,  
And I ne'er will be your slave,  
But I'll swim the sea of slaughter  
Till I sink beneath its wave!

—G. W. Patten from an old collection.

## THE MERRY MUSE.

Her Tyrant Master.

With cheeks aglow from kisses of the frost,  
Blue laughing eyes and shining hair, wind tossed,  
She comes in breathless, bright, a little late,  
Fair as a dream, but just as sweet.

She struggles with her rubbers on the mat,  
Lays by her jacket and hangs up her hat,  
Pulls off her gloves, and, sweetly thoughtful stands  
Beside the register, to warm her hands.

I look up, at her soft "good morning," then  
I mumble "morning," and lay down my pen,  
And then her task begins, and, like a Turk,  
I keep her—how remorselessly—at work!

Oh, yes, I could you, dear, I'm her "boss,"  
I hear her tell the bookkeeper I'm "cross,"  
And "hard to please." Great Scott! that isn't it!  
If she could only know how hard I'm hit!

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## UNLIKE TEA &amp; COFFEE—GOOD FOR THE NERVES.

The claims of cocoa as a useful article of diet are steadily winning recognition. Unlike tea and coffee, it is not only a stimulant but a nourisher; and it has the great advantage of leaving no narcotic effects. Hence it is adapted to general use. The strong may take it with pleasure, and the weak with impunity.

## Van Houten's Cocoa

"BEST &amp; GOES FARTHEST."

Van Houten's Cocoa (once tried, always used) leaves no injurious effects on the nervous system. It is no wonder, therefore, that in all parts of the world, this famous Cocoa is recommended by medical men instead of tea and coffee or other nervous stimulants for daily use by children or adults, hale and sick, rich and poor. "Largest sale in the world." Ask for VAN HOUTEN'S and take no other.

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